

Lahore Cantonments

During the British

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Irfan Ahmad



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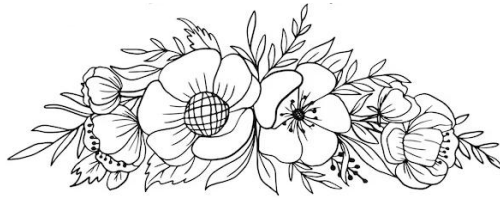
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Layout by Abdullah Mansoor

Dedicated to My Parents



Muhammad Aslam Mansur

Sarwar Sultana

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Preface

As the sun set over the Sikh Empire, a new chapter was being written in the annals of history. It was a time of great change, a time when the British Raj held sway over the land, and the fate of the people of Punjab hung in the balance. It was an epoch when the streets of Lahore echoed with the sound of gunfire, and the scent of gunpowder lingered in the air. But it was also a time of great struggle, as the people of Lahore fought to maintain their way of life in the face of overwhelming odds. The story of Lahore cantonments is one of triumph and tragedy, of heroism and heartbreak, and of the enduring spirit of a people who refused to be broken.

This is the first book to uncover the secrets of Lahore cantonments during the Raj. Starting in 1846, when the British took over the Lahore Fort and Anarkullee *Chaoniy*, the story unfolds a fascinating journey through time. It explores the creation of Meean Meer Cantonment in 1850 and its renaming as Lahore Cantonment in 1905, meticulously examining each era with great detail and intrigue. This was probably the only cantonment during the Raj that experienced relocation from the Fort to Anarkullee and finally to Meean Meer, all in a quest for a healthier living station for the troops. Yet, despite the grandeur of the Crown, all three garrisons endured such extensive mortality among the British soldiers that the cantonments earned the ominous nickname "The Graveyard of India."

In this groundbreaking work, we take a journey back in time to the very birth of the Meean Meer (The official name of Lahore cantonment for fifty-five years). We explore the challenges faced by its founders, and the harsh realities of life in a place where the struggle for survival was a daily battle. Through the eyes of those who lived and worked within its environ, we witness the rise of a cantonment that would come to define an era. But this is more than just a story of bricks and mortar. It is a story of the people who called Meean Meer home, and of the struggles they faced in a world that was rapidly changing. It is a tale of love and loss, of hope and despair, and of the indomitable human spirit that refused to be crushed.

This work spans a decade of meticulous research, involving the consultation of hundreds of books, reports, periodicals, newspapers, and articles. The majority of the literature examined originates from the nineteenth century. Most of the illustrations included are rare and have not been reproduced for nearly a century or more. Special chapters are dedicated to Rudyard Kipling's affection for Meen Meer and Lieutenant Charles Pulley's illustrations, highlighting their significance and contribution to the work.

Get ready to be swept away as we explore the past, discovering the hidden stories of the princes and travelers; *sahibs* and *memsahibs*; Tommies and prostitutes; romance and lust; *sepoys* and rebellions; followers and natives; horses and elephants; storms and earthquakes; cholera and malaria; joy and grief; and disease and death. Each chapter reveals a new aspect of this captivating history, leaving readers amazed and spellbound. Join us on this exciting adventure as we navigate through the twists and turns of history, shedding light on one of the most exciting cantonments in British India.

Irfan Ahmad

Glossary

angrez log: English People

attar: A fragrant essential oil

baboo: Native clerk

babuji: Father

baradari: Pavilion with twelve doors

beldar: Laborer

bera: Butler, Boy

bheestie: Water carrier

bowarche: Cook

burra haazri: Breakfast

Chakla: Brothel House

chaoniy: Cantonment

chapati: Indian bread

chello: Lets go

chota haazri: Morning tea

chicks: Curtains made of bamboo sticks

chota padri sahib: Junior Priest

chowdree: Respectful person of a village

chowki: Police station

chujja: Overhang at the lower edge of a roof

chupattie: Indian bread

chunam: Lime

cirguts: Cigarettes

coolies: Luggage bearers

dak gari: Postal four-wheeled carriage

dak: Post

dhai: Midwife

dooly: A box, often used to transport sick

double roti: English bread

durbar: The court of an Indian ruler

ekka: Two wheeled passenger carriage

fakeers: A group of Muslim holy men

feringhee: British people

fissad: Corruption, or depravity

Gharry: Postal four-wheeled carriage

git mit: Slang for European Accent

grammie: Laborer

hartal: Cessation of work and business

hathi: Elephant

havildar: A rank in military

hookah: Indian tobacco pipe

jalahars: Persian wheels of a well

jamadar: A rank in military

Jhilmil: Hangings draperies

karnel sahib: British Colonel

khalsa: An order of the Sikh religion

khansama: Head cook. chef

khitmutgar: Servant

khus khus: An aromatic grass

khwabgah: Bedroom

kos: Unit of Distance

kutchā: Mud house

mahaldarni: Brothel-keeper

mahaseer: A local fish in river Ravi

maidan: Ground

mali: Gardener

mashaq: Water filled inflated goat skins

maunds: A measurement of weight

mela: Fair

memsahibs: British Ladies

munshi: Clerk

moorghi: Chicken or Hen

murghi: Chicken or Hen

mitsuddi: Native Accountant

nala: Ravine

nawab: A native governor or noble man

nawar: Broad cotton tape

nazar or nuzzur: A gift presented to a ruler

palanquin: Covered litter carried by bearers

palki: A covered litter carried by bearers

pan: Sweets or tobacco rapped in Betel leaf

perwannah: Official latter

pucca: Solid or permanent

Panchayat: A local court

punkah: Fan

punkah-coolies: Fan bearers

punkah-walla: Fan bearer

pardah: Curtain

raja: Prince of an Indian state

rezai: Quilt

ruk: Grassy field

sabers: Cavalry sword with curved blade

sahibs: British officer

salaam: A gesture of greeting or respect

sanasis: A wandering beggar and ascetic

sepoy: Native soldier

serai: A motel or rest house

shahzada: Prince

shikaree: Hunter

sola topee: A sun hat

soorkhee: Powdered Burnt Bricks

sowars: Horse riders

subedars: A native junior army officer

tatty: A curtain made of *khus khus* grass

tehsil: Sub-district

thuggee: A police department in the Raj

tonga: Two-wheeled horse cart

topee: Cap

vakeel: A lawyer or solicitor

wazir: Minis

Variations of Spellings

After their victory at the Battle of Sobraon, British forces assumed control of the Lahore Citadel¹ and the Anarkullee Cantonment in 1846. The troops remained stationing at Citadel and Anarkullee for four years, until April 1850. With the establishment of Meean Meer Cantonment in 1850, the troops were relocated to their designated residence in Meean Meer. In 1905 the cantonment's name was changed to Lahore Cantonment. Throughout this period, various literary works and official records used different spellings to refer to both the "Anarkullee" and "Meean Meer" cantonments.

In the archives of history, one can observe the curious phenomenon of multiple spellings for the same place names. The most common spelling for Mian Mir Cantonment, for instance, was "Meean Meer," with "Mean Meer" being a close second. Other variants like "Mian Meer," "Meean Mir," "Mean Mir" and "Meen Meer" were also used but were rather infrequent. It is worth noting that even unconventional spellings like "Mianmeer" and "Meer and Meer" have been unearthed from literary records. A similar situation exists when it comes to the spelling of Anarkullee Cantonment. There were several spellings used, such as "Anarkullee", "Anarkulee", "Anarkuli", "Anarkali", "Anarkulle", "Anarkully" and "Anarkulli". Interestingly, it wasn't until the turn of the 20th century that the widely accepted spelling "Mian Mir" and "Anarkali" became prominent in literature. Prior to that, "Meean Meer" and "Anarkullee" were the most commonly used spellings in official documents and literary works.

The use of multiple spellings can be attributed to two possible explanations. Firstly, writers may have simply copied the spellings from existing written works or official records, hence whatever was available in the archives became the norm. Secondly, it is possible that the travelers and writers who wrote down these spellings were not familiar with the intricate tones of the local language. This lack of familiarity may have caused them to transcribe the words as they heard them being spoken by the locals, leading to the diverse spellings we see today. Here are just a few examples of the many different ways "Meean Meer" and "Anarkullee" has been spelled in literature.

A. Variations of Spellings of "Meean Meer"

- a. Meean Meer: "Sir Charles Napier issues a General Order from headquarters, Lahore, censuring in severe terms the commanding officers of certain regiments lately reviewed on the plain of Meean Meer. "The Sepoy," he said, "is a brave and an obedient soldier; and whenever he behaves ill, it is in a great measure the fault of his commanding officer."²
- b. Mean Meer: "I have not yet taken to drink," he said, speaking very slowly; and I am glad to say I know nothing of your disreputable acquaintance at Mean-Meer."³
- c. Meen Meer: "Write soon, and let me know all the news in Meen Meer."⁴
- d. Mian Meer: "The garrison at the capital, Lahore, of which Mian Meer was the cantonment, was disarmed by a 'coup de main', while the populace marveled."⁵
- e. Meean Mir: "At Meean Mir all three native corps were disarmed. The 16th, 26th, and 49th are the regiments there."⁶
- f. Mean Mir: "A number of regiments were concentrated at Mean Mir, Mooltan, and elsewhere in the first place, and remained there for a few weeks before proceeding to the front."⁷

- g. Meeanmeer: "On the 20th the citadel of Lahore was occupied by a British garrison, and the army was encamped on the plain of Meeanmeer."⁸
- h. Meer and Meer: "invited us all to dine at the artillery mess at "Meer-and-Meer," Wednesday night."⁹
- i. Mian Mir: "Men who came from malarious stations like Peshawar and Mian Mir at once fell victims, and it seems true that malarial fever so diminishes the vital energy of a man that he succumbs easily to lung inflammation in these mountain climates."¹⁰

B. Variations of Spellings of "Anarkullee"

- a. Anarkullee: "Edwardes stated the amount of reinforcement that was deemed necessary, and the Resident on receipt of this seems immediately to have ordered the Moveable Brigade at Anarkullee, 3000 strong, with twelve guns, to proceed down the Ravee, while another brigade was to descend the Sutlej with the Siege Train from Ferozepore."¹¹
- b. Anarkulee: "At the same time, at Anarkulee, there were 17 percent, of the European foot artillery in hospital. In the Royal Regiment the average has risen to upwards of 30 percent."¹²
- c. Anarkuli: "Beyond the enceinte were large bazaars and thickly populated suburbs, not now existing. The most populous quarter was Langar Khan, between the civil station and Anarkuli."¹³
- d. Anarkulle: "Blameless and exemplary in all the relations of domestic and social life, Sir Robert Montgomery has striven to do his duty to God and man. The improvements in the station of Anarkulle, in the new station now springing up near Government house, and in the beautiful gardens which surround the John Lawrence Hall, are evidences of his attention to matters which conduce so much to the comfort and pleasure of us all."¹⁴
- e. Anarkulli: "The rains, which Henry had wished to avoid, ceased early, and then a terribly unhealthy season set in. The old cantonments at Anarkulli were devastated by disease, and Sir Charles Napier's new ones at Mean Meer fared even worse."¹⁵
- f. Anarkully: "If one-tenth of the money now being spent at Mean Meer had been expended on improving the Anarkully cantonment, and clearing and draining it, we should have had as healthy, and a much more military position."¹⁶
- g. Anarkali: "In the crowded suburb of Anarkali, which we must traverse in order to reach the post-office, the bazaars extend out from the city gate to the European civil lines."¹⁷

The fact that there are so many ways to spell Meean Meer and Anarkullee shows how amazing and adaptable language can be. Language changes over time and it's fascinating to see how this has resulted in a wide range of spellings for this great cantonment. This variety of spellings adds to the mystery and intrigue surrounding the place in literature throughout history. As we set forth on this journey of historical inquiry, we must be mindful of the importance of selecting a spelling for this work that truly embodies the essence of the era we desire to explore. With this in mind, we have made the decision to utilize the spellings that were most prevalent during the era under examination, namely "Meean Meer" and "Anarkullee" throughout this literary work. Through this careful selection, we aim to bring the readers on a journey through time, allowing them to gain an intimate understanding of the language, dialects, and spelling conventions that characterized the bygone period.

Notes

1. The Lahore Fort was called citadel in old days. The Fort is located at the northern end of walled city of Lahore, and spreads over an area greater than 200,000 square meters. See Charles Alexander Gordon, *Experiences of an Army Surgeon in India* (London: Bailliere, Tindall, and Cox, 1872), 41.
2. Joseph Irving, *The Annals of Our Time: A Diurnal of Events, Social and Political, Home and Foreign, From the Accession of Queen Victoria, June 20, 1837* (London: Macmillan, 1875), 288.
3. J. Masterman, *The Scotts of Best Minster, Volume I* (London: R. Bentley, 1889), 152.
4. Colonel W. E. Baker, "Papers Relating to the Late Discontent among Local European Troops in India," in *East India European Troops*, March 1860, 732.
5. Major G. F. Macmunn, *The Armies of India* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1911), 101.
6. G. R. Elsmie, *Field-Marshal Sir Donald Stewart. An Account of His Life, Mainly in His Own Words* (London: John Murray, 1903), 44.
7. William Patrick Andrew, *Our Scientific Frontier* (London: W.H. Allen, 1880), 7.
8. John Clark Marshman, *Abridgment of the History of India from the Earliest Period to the Present Time; with a Map* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1880), 452.
9. John B. Ireland, *Wall-Street to Cashmere: A Journal of Five Years in Asia, Africa, and Europe; Comprising Visits, During 1851, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, To The Danemora Iron Mines, The "Seven Churches," Plains of Troy, Palmyra, Jerusalem, Petra, Seringapatam, Surat* (New York: S. A. Rollo, 1859), 364.
10. Colonel H. B. Hanna, *The Second Afghan War 1878-79-80 Its Causes, its Conduct and its Consequences, Vol I* (London: Archibald Constable, 1899), 344.
11. George Buist, *Annals of India for the Year 1848* (Bombay: Times Press, 1849), 46.
12. "Progress of Epidemics in India and China," in *The Medical Times London*, Volume 24 (Vol. 3 of new series), October 25, 1851, 448.
13. David Ross, *The Land of the Five Rivers and Sindh Sketches Historical and Descriptive* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1883), 123.
14. William Ferguson Beatson, *Sketches of Some Distinguished Anglo-Indians: with an Account of Anglo-Indian Periodical Literature* (London: W.H. Allen, 1887), 211.
15. R. Bosworth Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence, Vol. I* (London: Smith and Elder, 1883), 358.
16. Henry Lawrence, "Sir Charles Napier's Posthumous Work," in *The Calcutta Review*, Vol. XXII. January—June, 1854, 241.
17. Edwin Lord Weeks, *From the Black Sea through Persia and India* (New York: Harper, 1896), 171.

Curtain Raiser



Fig. A.1: Inscribed upon the front page of 'The Illustrated London News' of November 29, 1845,¹ is a fascinating engraving captioned "Death of the Wuzzeer of Lahore" bearing witness to the fateful demise of Jawahar Singh, the prime minister of Kingdom of Lahore. The illustration portrays the assassination upon the extensive plain of Meean Meer, where the Lahore Cantonments were to be erected, the Khalsa soldiers mercilessly plunged their knives into the hapless victim, forever sealing his tragic fate.

Amidst the extensive stretch of Lahore, lay a barren and desolate plain. The barren land was scarce in vegetation, with the sun-scorched earth cracked and parched, begging for a drop of water. Hardened clay, stubborn in its resistance, had long been the loyal companion of this lifeless landscape. Beneath the surface, deep down where the naked eye could not see, lay limestone fragments, an intricate network of coral reefs frozen in time. It was here, amongst this lonely terrain, that fate had planned the birth of the Meean Meer (Lahore) Cantonment, a place where life would flourish among the barrenness of the past.² In the year 1845, the Meean Meer Cantonment was but a distant dream, lost within the infertile expanse of the dusty plains. Only the encampment of Gulab Singh³ and the artillery of the Sikh Army encamped over the arid landscape, while the rest of Lahore's garrison remained stationed within the Fort and surrounding cantonments.⁴ Little did they know, a new legacy was about to take root among the dust and debris, destined to leave an indelible mark upon the history of this famous land.

On the early hours of September 24, 1845, a grand procession emerged as the brigades of the Sikh Army began to march from their respective camps and cantonments towards Meean Meer. The notable regular brigades, including those trained by foreign generals Avitabile Court and Ventura⁵ and the brigade of Gulab Singh, all gathered at the site. The artillery, dressed in their horse-artillery jackets, waited patiently for the events to unfold. On that day, the Sikh Army was gathered at Meean Meer to see the execution of Jawahar Singh Aulakh,⁶ brother of Maharani Jindan Kaur⁷ and guardian of young Maharaja Duleep Singh.⁸ After the death of Ranjit Singh, Jawahar was subsequently imprisoned by *Wazir* Hira Singh⁹ as he was suspected of making treasonous moves towards the East India Company. Upon Hira Singh's fall from power, Maharani Jindan selected her brother Jawahar as *Wazir* on May 14, 1845.¹⁰

Jawahar had become very arrogant after gaining power, and he started mistreating Kashmira Singh and Peshora Singh, who were the adopted sons of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Sikh army was angry and upset because they respected anyone who was close to Ranjit Singh. Kashmira and Peshora were killed soon after, and Peshora's death was especially cruel and deceitful.¹¹ Peshora's murder made the army very angry. For almost three weeks, the army *Panchayat*¹² discussed what to do with Jawahar, who was hiding in Lahore fort and was afraid to show himself because he received threatening messages every day. Finally, the *Panchayat* decided that they should kill Jawahar and then march towards Attock to take revenge of the death of Peshora Singh. On September 21, 1845, Jawahar was summoned to appear before the army.¹³

In the Lahore Fort, Jawahar received a message from the *Panchayat* to appear in person and respond to their summon. But instead of responding, he sent a message back in defiance. The *Panchayat* then took control of the state formally, in the name of the *Khalsa Panth*.¹⁴ They informed Jawahar that he had been sentenced to death, and if he did not appear at Meean Meer the next morning, they would storm the fort and kill everyone inside.¹⁵ The showdown has been narrated in detail by George Macmunn in his book *Lure of the Indus being final acquisition of India by the East India Company* as follows:

The unfortunate *Vizier*, who was but reaping as he had sown, made one more attempt to escape. He distributed 50,000 more rupees to the troops in the fort who let him move outwards. The guards at the outer gate, however, held responsible by the *Khalsa* that he did not get away, refused him egress. Next day

came orders that four battalions and a battery were being sent to fetch him to Mian Mir. Hearing this, all the troops in the fort marched away to the Plain to join their comrades. The game was up, the last hour had come; and the *Vizier* braced himself to face it. Taking with him the *Ranee*, the Maharajah, now twelve years of age, on two elephants, accompanied by the *Ranee's* attendants on two more, and escorted by fifty faithful horsemen, Jowahir Singh set forth. With him he took also treasure and jewels in case one more turn of fate might show him a way out.¹⁶

When Duleep Singh, arrived with his mother Maharani Jindan at Meean Meer, they were welcomed with great respect. The Maharani was very worried about her brother's safety. The Military *Panchayat* was sitting on the right side of the line. Four battalions were ordered to the front to remove Jawahar's escort. Then, another battalion surrounded the elephants of the royal family. Ten *Panchayat* members came forward, and the Maharani's elephant was ordered to kneel down. She was then escorted to a beautiful tent nearby.¹⁷ After the procession stopped, Jawahar was ordered to leave his elephant. He tried to negotiate, but a Sikh hit him and took Duleep away from him, asking him how he could disobey the *Khalsa*. Jindan held her son and pleaded for mercy for her brother, but suddenly heard a familiar voice screaming in agony. She threw her son away in rage and grief, but a soldier caught him.¹⁸

While this was happening, the soldiers were executing their plan to kill Jawahar, whom they hated. They had a soldier climb up a ladder placed against his elephant, stab him with his bayonet, and throw him to the ground where he was then brutally killed with fifty wounds. The Sikh army took revenge for the deaths of Kashmira and Peshora.¹⁹ The last *Wazir* of the Sikh Empire, which was founded by Ranjit Singh died in the plains of Meean Meer. Jindan showed great bravery during this difficult time. She even made sure those responsible for the assassination were punished. She took control of the government and held court openly, perhaps motivated by her brother's death and her son's danger.²⁰

Only five years after the distressing events that left a lasting imprint of turmoil on this plain, the British authorities made a significant decision. They chose to repurpose this historically significant land and turn it into the distinguished Meean Meer Cantonment. The story of this extraordinary transformation, filled with its own set of obstacles and unexpected twists, is about to unravel in the upcoming pages. Prepare to delve into the intriguing narrative of this transformation, as the layers of history gradually unveil their secrets.

Notes

1. *Death of the Wuzeer of Lahore*, 1845, Illustration, in *The Illustrated London News*, November 29, 1845, Frontpage.
2. W. A. Green, "Mean Meer," in *Royal Commission on the Sanitary State of The Army in India. Vol. II* (London: George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1863), 259.
3. Gulab Singh, served as the prime minister of the Sikh Empire during the last days of the conflict with the British. During the war, Gulab Singh remained neutral, and this ultimately contributed to the British victory. After the war, the Treaty of Amritsar was signed in 1846, which formalized the sale of all lands in Kashmir by the British for 7,500,000 Rupees to Gulab Singh. He became the first Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir. This state was established after the First Anglo-Sikh War, which ended in the defeat of the Sikh

-
- Empire. See K. M. Panikkar, *Gulab Singh, 1792—1858, Founder of Kashmir* (London: Martin Hopkinson, 1930).
4. Lieut.-General Sir George Macmunn, *The Lure of the Indus Being the Final Acquisition of India by The East India Company* (London: Jarrolds, 1934), 157.
 5. Paolo Crescenzo Martino Avitabile and Jean-Baptiste Ventura were famous generals in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's *Sarkar-i-Khalsa*. See Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab* (Calcutta: Calcutta Central Press, 1891), 427.
 6. Jawahar was the brother of Maharani Jindan Kaur. He held the significant responsibility of being appointed as the guardian and tutor of Maharaja Duleep Singh, Jindan's son. See Sir Lepel H. Griffin, *The Panjab Chiefs, Vol. I* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1890), 11.
 7. Maharani Jindan Kaur was regent of the Sikh Empire from 1843 until March 29, 1847. After the Sikh Empire was dissolved on March 29, 1847, the Sikhs claimed her as the Maharani and successor of Maharaja Duleep Singh. However, on the same day the British took full control and refused to accept the claim. See G.S. Sidhu, *The Sikh Woman* (Middlesex: Tue Suku Missionary Society U.K., 1977), 28.
 8. Duleep Singh was the last Maharaja of the Sikh Empire. Duleep was the youngest son of Maharani Jindan Kaur and Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In September 1843, at the tender age of five, he was appointed to the throne with his mother as the regent. However, following their loss in the first Anglo-Sikh War, he was placed under the control of a British Resident. Eventually, he was dethroned by the British after the second Anglo-Sikh War and subsequently exiled to Britain. See Michael Alexander, *Queen Victoria's Maharajah: Duleep Singh, 1838-93* (London: Phoenix, 2001), 2.
 9. Hira Singh Dogra was prime minister of the Sikh kingdom of Lahore from September 17, 1843 to December 21 1844. See Khushwant Singh, *The Fall of the Kingdom of the Punjab* (Gurgaon: Viking Penguin Books India, 2014), 44.
 10. Harbans Singh, *Concise Encyclopedia of Sikhism* (Delhi: Anand Sons, 2013), 325.
 11. Alexander Gardner, *Memoirs of Alexander Gardner* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1898), 258.
 12. Sikh Army *Panchayats*, or regimental committees, were formed in the post Ranjit Singh period of Sikh rule in the Punjab, they wielded great power during 1841-45. See Macmunn, *Lure of the Indus*, 149.
 13. Gardner, *Memoirs of Alexander Gardner*, 259.
 14. The *Khalsa Panth* refers to both a community that practices Sikhism and a specific group of initiated Sikhs. Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of Sikhism, established the *Khalsa* tradition in 1699. See Pashaura Singh and Louis E. Fenech, *The Oxford Handbook of Sikh Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 237.
 15. Macmunn, *Lure of The Indus*, 159.
 16. Macmunn, *Lure of The Indus*, 159-60.
 17. Gardner, *Memoirs of Alexander Gardner*, 260.
 18. Gardner, *Memoirs of Alexander Gardner*, 260.
 19. Gardner, *Memoirs of Alexander Gardner*, 261.
 20. Mrs. Herbert Edwardes, *Memorials of the Life and Letters of Major-General Sir Herbert B. Edwardes, Vol. I* (London: Kegan Paul and Trench, 1886), 32.

Set against the backdrop of the fading Sikh Empire and the dawn of British rule, the story of Lahore Cantonments unfolds as a tale of both triumph and tragedy. Beginning in 1846 with the British takeover of Lahore Fort and Anarkali Chaoni, this meticulously researched work chronicles the creation of Meean Meer Cantonment in 1850, later renamed Lahore Cantonment in 1905. The narrative delves into the challenges faced by the founders and the harsh realities of life in this "Graveyard of India," a cantonment plagued by high mortality rates among British soldiers. Yet, beyond its architectural and military significance, the story reveals a rich tapestry of human experiences—the struggles, heartaches, and triumphs of the people who lived and fought in the shadow of the British Crown.

Through a decade of exhaustive research and rare illustrations, this book captures the essence of a bygone era. The lives of sahibs, memsahibs, soldiers, rebels, and civilians come to life, woven together by the pervasive themes of love, loss, survival, and resilience. Special chapters illuminate the personal connections of figures like Rudyard Kipling and Lieutenant Charles Pulley to the cantonment, while rare photographs and maps add a visual depth to the narrative. This book is not merely a historical account but a thrilling journey through time, where each chapter uncovers the hidden stories of Lahore Cantonment's tumultuous past, leaving readers spellbound by the drama, intrigue, and human spirit that define this remarkable chapter of British India.